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Rural—
—Rhymes



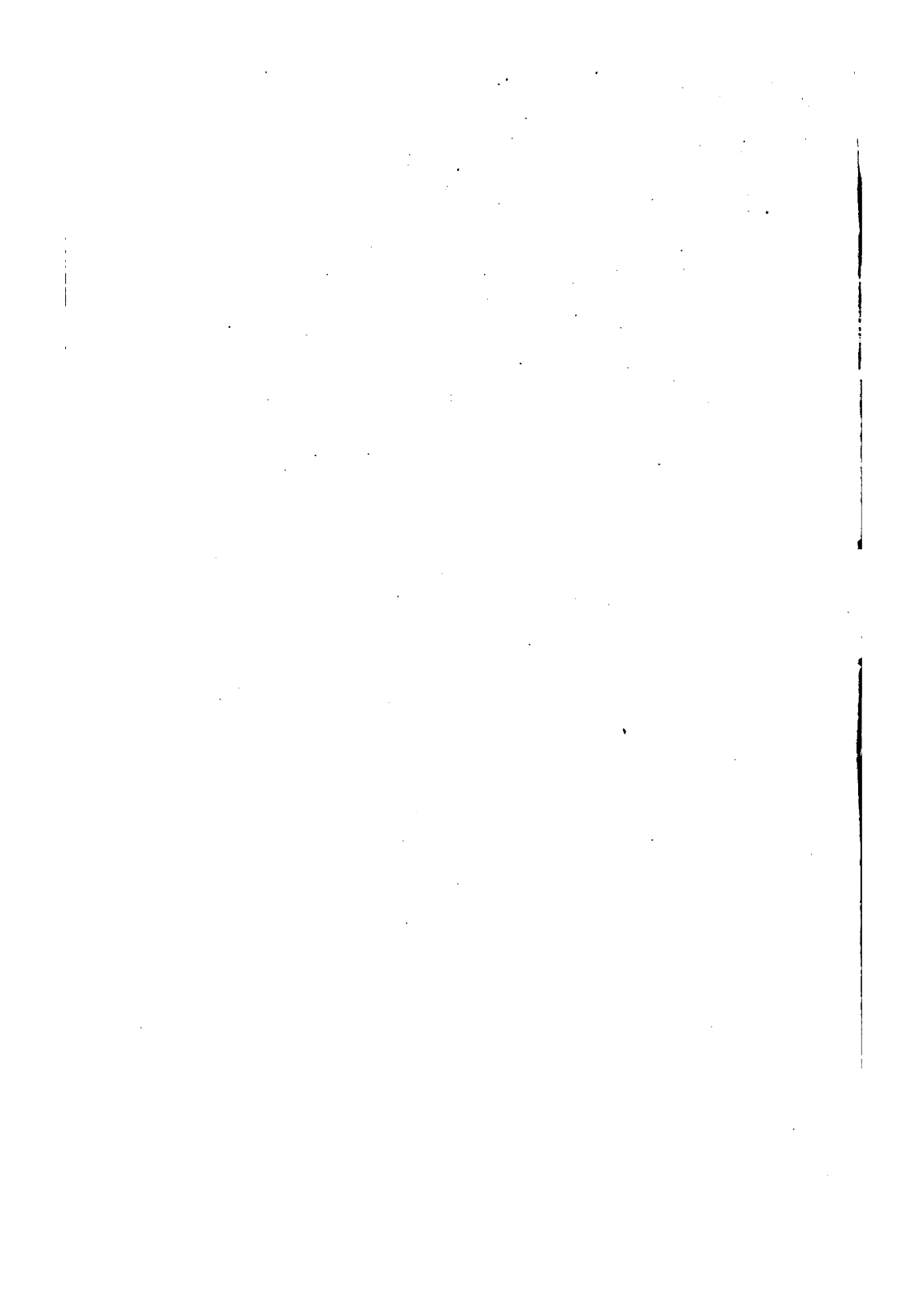
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Pun'kin Seed Paradise

Rural Rhymes

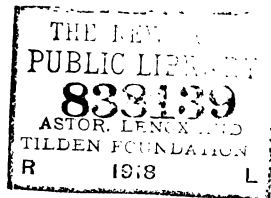
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Poems of the Country



Pun'kin Seed Paradise



FORNINST the inlet to the pond,
And sneakin' off among the bushes,
Where alders plant their stubborn feet,
And in the drink the willer pushes,
Where rushes grow,
And lilies blow,
And cat-tails stand as stiff as steeples,
And watch the herons stalk about
Like solemn Sunday-meetin' peoples,
There ye can allers find a spot,
Beyant the weeds and water truck,
Where ye can bait fer pun'kin seeds,
And always count on havin' luck.

They seem to have a nimble knack
Of turnin' out this kind of fry;
Fer I have fished here forty year,
And never onc't have fished it dry.
In spring or fall,
In shine or squall,
They allers seems to be a-waitin',
And kalkerlate you 're wastin' time,
While you 're a-smokin' and a-baitin';

Rural Rhymes

And when your hook wades down to them,
With some deceivin' little bite,

The foremost nabs it fair and square,
And jerks the cork clean out o' sight.

If I was seekin' for a gift

To give a friend I liked right smart,
Some token likewise of respect,

To show the feelin' of the heart,

I'd lead the way,

Some well-picked day,

To this lone spot bound in by bushes,

Where alders plant their stubborn feet,

And in the drink the willer pushes,

Beyant the lilies and the flag,

Where black the water gets and deep ;

I'd pint him out this favored spot,

And make it his'n for to keep.

And then I'd want him for to feel

That peace of soul, calm-like and white,

That allers steals upon me when

I'm waitin' for another bite.

And when the hook

With knowin' look,

Philanders down the wat'ry ways

And when his cork goes out o' sight,

(Sinks eloquently from his gaze),

Pun'kin Seed Paradise

I'd have him feel that heavenly thrill
Shoot through him like a streak of light,
When ev'ry hair and ev'ry nerve
Is shoutin' that he's got a bite!

I've fished here more 'n forty year
In days a'most of ev'ry kind,
And not the least I've landed high,
Was peace and comfort to my mind.
And when, some day,
I go the way

That all must go, I'd like right well,
To rest where I could see this spot
And catch a whiff of lily smell,
And thinkin' while I bait my hook
I pull my pipe with cheerful sighs,
And feel a pure content to onc't
And thankful bless my paradise.

The Yeller Thistle-Bird

IN the clearin', where the thistle an' poke an'
fireweed,
Plant their feet among the ashes and sow
ther harvest seed,
Ther the little yeller thistle-bird goes swingin'
through the sky
Like they's ridin' on the ocean when the tide
were wavin' high,
An' they look like dandelion blows, got loose an'
given wings
An' a voice (made up ter me, it seems, of the finest
fiddle strings).
An' they dance among the posies, with the snar-
lin' bumblebee,
Cuttin' up ther shines an' capers, thet makes me
laf ter see.
An' ther haint a bird that's mean enough to tech
the little mites,
An' I kinder think they're lookin' out ter see
they get ther rights.
They're like children in the clearin', playin' they
was married folks,
For they never seem in airnest, but air allers full
o' jokes,

The Yeller Thistle-Bird

An' they look so ouden place, like, 'mong the
stumps 'n' burnin' logs,
With the hot wind whirlin' madly till your very
breath it clogs.

I stop sometimes to watch them, an' they rest me
like a cup
Uv water cool and sparklin' jest from the spring
dipped up,
An' sometimes my gold-haired baby, with my dinner
in a pail,
Comes to me an' I leave the wedge still sticking
in the rail,—
An' we set down clost together like es if we's
only one,
An' we eat, 'n' laf, 'n' visit, till ther isn't left a
crum'.

Then she wanders 'round the clearin', jest as busy
as I am,
An' my work seems twice as easy, 'n' I feel so
stout 'n' calm.
An' the yeller birds fly near her, jest es if they
knowed her too,
An' wos hankerin' fer her lovin', es I half suspect
they do;

Rural Rhymes

While I get the birds 'n' babies all kinked up in
my heart,
Fer when they're nigh about me, I kent keep
them quite apart.
But the yeller birds keep singin', an' my gal has
wandered home,
An' I get my thoughts untangled, which, some-
times, may like to roam.

They make me think of babies in a home wher
all the rest
Air old, 'n' gray, 'n' wrinkled, an' in ugly home-
spun drest,
Er a thought thet God made livin' when he blest
the waitin' band
Of children, an' upon ther heads he laid his lovin'
hand.

An Idyl of the Farm

JOHNNY JAY, let down the bars,
And drive along the cattle;
Touch them up with hazel sprout,
And make their loud bells rattle.
Softly glow their loving eyes,
With thoughts of dewy feeding,
And long cool draughts from out the brook
That through the pasture's speeding.

Lady Jane, so proud and grand,
And stately, queenly Stella,
Will lead the van, while close behind
Shall come gay Cinderella;
And Jennie June, and Juliet,
And Portia, softly lowing,
Close up my drove of precious cows,
That down the lane is going.

And, Johnny Jay, let Duke and Dime
Make holiday in clover;
The fallow's plowed, the wheat drawn in,
Their work is fairly over.

Rural Rhymes

And let poor puny Brutus through,
 (His name's a sad misnomer),
And pass that ancient party in,
 Old Bonaparte and Homer.

Now, Johnny Jay, put up the bars,
 And drive along the cattle,
Speed their lagging steps apace,
 And make their loud bells rattle;
And turn them in the clover field
 Beyond the summer fallow,
Where clover grows so rank and sweet,
 And brooks are clear and shallow.

And, Johnny Jay, when you come back,
 (Think well the matter over),
Tell me if sweeter things there be
 Than cows and blossomed clover;
A dewy lane, a meadow brook
 Aflow with gurgling sweetness;
With joy they brim my happy life
 And fill it to completeness.

When the Corn's A-Talkin'

GENTLE awtum, gentle awtum,
You're a charmer, ain't ye, now?
With yer paint on like the nation,
Lookin' finer 'n all creation,
With yer duds of red and yellor,
Like big apples ripe and meller,
Stickin' fast to bush and bough.

You're a sweetheart, ain't ye, awtum?
With yer posies 'long the brook,
Like live coals of fire glowin'
Down in the late green mowin';
And yer gentians torn and tattered,
And yer golding-rod thick scattered,
Like fine picters in a book.

You're a stunner, there's no doubtin',
With yer woods and swamps adrip,
And blackbirds whooping bizzy,
So'st my head gets light and dizzy,
A-listnin' to ther chatter,
And the wiery, fightin' clatter
Of the jaybird's raspin' lip.

Rural Rhymes

But I tell yer, awtum, squarly,
What I like the best of all,
Is ter hear the corn a-talkin'
When the wind is through it walkin',
And ter ketch the pumpkins listnin',
And a-layin' low and glistnin'
As ef waitin' fer a call.

And another thing I'm set on,
I'm a-achin' fer ter tell,
Is ter see the apples droppin',
And the chestnut burrs a-poppin',
And a-shellin' out ther plunder,
While the pigs are chankin' under;
O, I like this passin' well.

And now come ter think, I reckon
(As I'm sayin' now my say),
I must mention—but I'm thinkin'
It's the heart that's allers drinkin'
In the good that God has given,
Thet makes a life a-liven,
And fills even ev'ry day.

Po-o-o-o-ig, Po-o-o-o-ig

ES a general thing I ken safely say
Thet pork end poickry haint much akin,
Thet they be n't alike in no everage way,
Ner haint likely ter be ner never hev been:
But ter me when I stand et the head o' the lane,
With a bucket o' milk er a feed o' grain,
End call onc't er twic't with my might end main—
Po-o-o-o-ig, Po-o-o-o-ig!

End the whole drove comes on a canterin' trot,
End crowd like mad ter the feedin' spot;
Et's a sight well wuth a-lookin' ter see,
End thar's poickry thar quite a bit for me.

Ther manners, I 'low, haint oncommon fine,
End its appetite mostly they bring ter bear;
But strung along in a strugglin' line,
With each one a-pushin' ter git his share,
The nerly ones squealin' ter git a bite,
I laf and laf et the funny sight;
End when I call them et mornin' er night—
Po-o-o-o-ig, Po-o-o-o-ig!

End see them race out frum the clover lot,
End hurry like mad ter the feedin' spot,
They put me in mind uv some folks a bit,
Thet air allers a-strugglin' the most ter git.

Rural Rhymes

Then after the feedin', with enough content
Ter stock the lives of a hundred men,
They saunter away on nothin' bent,
Countin' no time ner where ner when;
But halt et some sleepy, drowsy spot,
Er zigzag back ter the clover lot
Ter wait the callin' uv which they wot,—
Po-o-o-o-ig, Po-o-o-o-ig!
End with fastest ahead, end the slow behind,
They reach the trough with the feedin' lined,
End the big end the strongest gits the pick uv all,
End the leavin's er left fer the weak end small.

Puttin' aside all moral end preach,
End countin' them only fer what they air,
End not what they might er might not teach,
But givin' them fairly what's fair end square,—
I like them pigs with ther piggish ways,
Ther sleepin' end eatin', up nights and days,
End I sometimes call, jest ter on them gaze,
Po-o-o-o-ig, Po-o-o-o-ig!
End see them jump up from a snorin' nap,
Er tair pell-mell through the paster gap,
End plunge in the troft with head and feet,
With a single idear, ter eat end eat.

Katydids



KATYDIDS, gay Katydids,
With riot running over,
You fill the air as full of song,

As fields are filled with clover,
And make the night as blithe and gay
As ever birds made summer day.

O Katydids, sweet Katydids,
The arch and boughs seem bending
As with a harvest weight of song,
Which laden night is sending
As tokens of our love to all,
Which sweet and soft as dewdrops fall.

O Katydids, sad Katydids,
You know my soul's complaining
That though the sky is bright to-night,
Down in my life it's raining;
'Tis raining, raining, all the year,
And not one day is bright and clear.

Rural Rhymes

O Katydids, wait, Katydids,
And though the tears may blind me,
I'll try to see if years ahead
Must be as those behind me—
Filled full of hopes that lived to cheat,
And bitter born of all the sweet.

O Katydids, sing, Katydids,
And may your glad notes teach me,
That some sweet night, we know not when,
God's tender hand will reach me;
And some day, somewhere, eyes that weep
Shall close in happy, restful sleep.

A Summer Night



Y trees are vocal with katydids,
The air is filled with a tuneless lay,
And the boughs and the leaves responsive play,
As the cooing wind of the sweet night bids;
The ripe fruit drops from the burdened tree,
And the moon rides low in a hazy sea.

The corn tells over some legend old,—
Or, who shall only but vaguely guess
The meaning of whisper and soft caress,
And tales that are more than thrice times told?
Ah, field of corn, you clothe to me
The night in a strange, sweet mystery!

Silence of night made still with song,
Sounds that ever seem deepest hush,
When specter feet through the damp grass crush,
And every path of the short night throng.
Alone am I left with myself and mood,
Yet thronged as a city my solitude.

Rural Rhymes

Faces are here that long have hid
 Their pain and their sorrow beneath the sod,
 And forms I see that a tender God
Has taken from under the coffin lid.
 And dear lips speak that have long been cold,
 And I hear them the same as I did of old.

Night of the summer, creep slowly by,
 And let me but live awhile like this,—
 With my living and dead in quiet bliss,
Forgetting even that I am I.
 Let me live with the living and those at rest,
 And wonder if heaven or earth is best.

It Makes Me Tickled

IT makes me more than tickled when I see
The jolly birds come swinging from the
South,

With sweet old tunes in every yawpin' mouth,
Like they was celebratin' Jubilee
At gettin' back to where they used to be.

Of all the tribe, I can't, to save my life,
Tell which I like the feelin'est and best,
Ner which I think the sweetest, purtiest,—
My mind is mixed in argyin' and strife:
Yer think it out,—I can't to save my life.

Sometimes I think I'm gladdest 'cause this one,
A robin or a bluebird, has come back;
Then when that dumplin' peewee finds the track
That leads to home, and sings to think it's come,
I reckon then, may be, that it's the one.

The blackbird, with a picnic in its heart
Of laugh and fun—sometimes, I think it's it,
A bitin' off its singing bit by bit;
But when I hear "cheewink, cheewink, cheewink!"
Then, that's the one, I kinder halfway think.

Rural Rhymes

A man es old es I am hain't no call,
More 'n likely, fer to feel this tickled feel,
To let the drunken gladness through him reel,
And outen all his worries great and small,
Instedder kinder huggin' of 'm all.

But when the spring comes, sneezin', limpin' back,
The birds to chirk and cheer it on its way,
I wanter take it in my arms and say,
"I'm glad you've found the homeward-leadin'
track :
I'm tickled in my soul that you've come back."

When Katydid's Holler



WHEN the thrashin' is over,
An' the late blowin' clover
Is makin' the air smell sweet as a
pink,
An' the corn is a-jumpin',
Jest fairly a-humpin',
With sun an' with dew fer eat and fer drink;
When they're draggin' the foller,
An' the Katydid's holler,
It's nigh about heaven to me, then, I think.

When the wind is a-idlin',
An' comes along sidlin',
Its breath smellin' sweet of posies and smoke,
An' the marsh is a-glowin'
With golding rod blowin',
An' the berries air red on the elder and poke,
An' they're draggin' the foller,
An' the Katydid's holler,
Life seems to me, then, nicer 'n a joke.

When the crows air a-yellin',
An' the blackbirds air tellin'
Twenty diff'rent stories all et a time,

Rural Rhymes

An' the punkin is glistenin'
An' layin' low listenin',
Er a-tryin' through the lane fence to clime,
An' they're draggin the foller,
An' the Katydids holler,
Things seem to me, then, chirper 'n a chime.

When the taters stop growin'
An' the holyhocks blowin',
An' the frost sneaks aroun' like a thief,
An' the shellbarks air fallin',
An' the jaybirds is callin',
An' the bushes 'n' trees gittin' yellor of leaf,
An' they're draggin' the foller,
An' the Katydids holler,
It's paradise time, it's my candid belief.

They sing like they's crazy—
Some a-spurrin'—some lazy—
An' they fairly load down ev'ry tree,
With th'er foolish mad singin's,
The'r arg'yn's an' flingin's,
What hain't no sense fer's I ken see;
But when they're draggin' the foller
An' the Katydids holler,
It's a time thet's mighty nigh heav'n to me.

“Co’ Boss—Co’ Boss!”



TANDING beside the woodland gate,
His hat thrown down upon the sward,
He calls the cows that aimless wait,
Knee-deep within the shallow ford:
“Co’ boss—co’ boss!”

His eyes are where the sun has left
Its blush upon the summer sky,
And kindled red the sullen cleft,
Yet calls he with a half-heard sigh:
“Co’ boss—co’ boss!”

Yearns he for honor that doth crown
The hero of the battlefield?
Or sighs he for the calm renown
The pen shall win instead of shield?
Oh, bosh!—oh, bosh!

Approach and list. He murmurs now—
A murmur soft as falling leaf—
His glance falls on each listless cow;
He’s “figgerin’” up the price of beef.
“Co’ boss—co, boss!”

A Harvest Hymn



OME, thou Fount of every blessing, tune
my heart to sing thy grace,"—

Field and forest, vale and hilltop, in each
one behold the trace

Of the goodness of the Giver of all blessings, and
His hand

Is outstretched in benediction in this overflowing
land.

Only now, steel-sinewed reapers clanged their way
through harvest-field,

Smiting with their glistening sickles leagues on
leagues of golden yield;

Riches multiplied by riches, treasures multiplied
by gain,

Till the land is but a storehouse, heaped and
brimmed with garnered grain,

Like an Amazon of plenty, flowing through the
summer days—

"Streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs
of loudest praise."

"Teach me some melodious sonnet;" teach my
halting pen its way

To the heart of some sweet measure, full of glad-
ness as this day,

A Harvest Hymn

When the land laughs in its fullness, making hill
and valley ring,
And the sky gives back the chorus in its echoed
mimicking;
Land of plenty, milk and honey—Egypt's Nile
hath flowed this way,
Lotus-blossomed, bearing onward never such an
argosy;
Higher build the great storehouses for this harvest
gathering,
Hail the rulers of the season—Wheat the queen,
and Corn the king.

See the vines with clusters hanging, bending till
they reach the ground,
Every vineyard laden, kneeling like a Bacchus, to
be crowned;
Bees from murmuring hives set sailing out upon
the scent main,
Finding harbor and a cargo on the sweet alfalfa
plain;
Orchards bowing with a fruitage fit for trees of
Paradise,
Nectared with Arabia's spices, painted by the
summer skies;
Stately Corn holds kingly council, touching blades
each lip to seal:
What it tells—what fabled secrets, only Nature
shall reveal;

Rural Rhymes

Clover-blooms, with hearts of honey, clothe the
 hillside and the glade
With a fabric rich and queenly as an empress's
 brocade;
Flowers bloom in mad abandon, reckless, waste-
 ful, wanton, wild,
Every petal dipped in fragrance, sweet as kiss of
 ittle child.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me," reaching out thy
 hand to bless
With rich bounties every day—with a goodness
 limitless;
Smiling through thy bitter tears, shed for constant
 waywardness
Of thy children; smiling, giving with a kingly
 generousness;
Leading with a hand so kindly down life's long
 and weary path,
Stretching on beyond earth's harvest to the eter-
 nal aftermath;
God of harvest, hope, and heaven, though we sin-
 ful, wayward be,
When this sinful life is over, may we "hide our-
 selves in Thee."

Instructing the Delegate

ONE night at Peewee Hollow, when the air
was full of scents,
And the cornshocks in the stubble stood
like rows of ragged tents,
And the red trees walled the horizon as warlike
battlements,—
While the katydids were singing like foolish lad
and lass,
And the night was dripping diamonds of dew
upon the grass,—
There gathered in the old brick church, its mem-
bers, full sedate,
To discuss the coming Conference and instruct
the delegate.

Elder Wilder led the meeting, and his voice was
full of tears
As he prayed the same old earnest prayer he had
prayed for thirty years,
Which was followed by the singing of that hymn
so martial, grand,
“From Greenland’s Icy Mountains and India’s
Coral Strand.”

Rural Rhymes

It was not so much suggestive of the object of
the call,
But simply that they liked it and knew it best
of all.
There was silence for a minute, then Brother
Peleg Hart,
Rose and said that he was waitin' fer some one
to make a start;
But, bein's 't was gittin' latish, he would say to
Brother Wait,
Sence he'd been chose unanimous fer ter be the
delegate
Ter send ter Cumfrey Conference an' select a
preacher there,
He'd be up and down a-tellin' just what he wanted
square.
"I hain't no use fer preachers, I'm right outen fer
ter tell,
As wobbles their belief of a good old-fashioned-
hell,
Them as shies around the Scripters an' the burnin'
brimstone text;
An' the man I want fer preacher at Peewee Holler
next
Is one who'll say a sinner will be sot on the left
hand,
Among the goats, as sure as guns, and be forever
damned."

Instructing the Delegate

Then Jacob Brown swung upward like a razor
opening out,
And said he "'lowed to differ with Brother Hart
about
The kind of preacher fer this place; I hope to see
one sent
Who will preach a God of kindness and on loving
mercy bent—
A Father of forgiving, though repentance cometh
late;
A God who loves to love one, and awful hates to
hate.
I am tired of only hearing that I must mostly fear
My Maker, that to mansions I can read my title
clear."

Then Ebenezer Jenkins 'rose and with a mien
sedate,
Remarked, "whilst they's advisin' he'd advise the
delegate
Ter pick a easy liver with fambly quitish small,
Which would cut the quartridge sumwhat, an' be
pleasant fer them all,
A preacher full of piousness, his mind on Heaven
sot
So hard he'd hardly sense it whether more or less
he got."

Rural Rhymes

A silence for a minute, then Squire Darwin Drum
Arose with studied calmness and remarked, "The
pendulum

Of time is swinging faster and the hour hand
would soon

Touch the forehead of the dial—the twelve o'clock
of noon ;

That Progression is the watchword and Intellect
must rule,

That Mind is made the master in the new and
coming school.

And my choice of preacher would be one of sci-
entific bent,

Who could preach without the Bible if it served
his best intent ;

One who pierced the transcendental and explored
the grand abyss

Of knowledge, little dreamed of in the days of
Genesis ;

A man who seldom mentioned that weary primal
fall,

One of just a hint of Huxley and a pinch of In-
gersoll."

Then Squire Drum sank seatward and the candles
blinked and blurred,

And the silence grew oppressive, for no one spoke
a word.

Instructing the Delegate

Till at last with pained expression upon the delegate,
To the coming Cumfrey Conference, good, loyal
Deacon Wait,
Rose with voice in tearful tremble and eyes with
moisture dim,
Said, "The good old-fashioned preacher was good
enough for him—
One who preached faith and repentance and the
Sermon on the Mount,
The forgiveness of the Father and the purifying
fount;
The Bible, just the Bible, kept ever fair in view,
And a man who must keep praying just the same
as me and you,
In order to be worthy to do his Master's work;
And I tell you, brethren, squarely I may seem to
act the shirk
When I say I'm not the person to attend the Con-
ference,
And with thanks decline the honor in every word
and sense.
All things with God are possible, but 't would tax
Almighty skill
To make a man to please you—but, some day per-
haps he will."
And the candles on the pulpit blinked a faint and
flickering spark—
Sank from sight within their sockets, and the
house was left in dark.

The Robin Pilgrim

I SAW you with your troop of warblers, lusty
grown,
(The merry children of the last sweet summer year)—

Bid farewell to the spot, now songless, reft and
lone,

Where crumbling stands your nest, full desolate
and drear.

Your farewell was a song, with sadness through it
spun—

'Twas as a shadowed day—a day with hidden
sun.

I watched you rise in air and to the southward
fly—

Then halt and to the old home-tree come back,
And sing a trembling note—a homesick long good-
bye—

And then anew start once again upon the un-
beaten track.

O, Robin Pilgrim, how much life's share is here
Made up of "coming back" to mem'ries sweet
and dear!

The Robin Pilgrim

In lands where winter days are as a story told,
Where summers wanton come, and wasting wanton go,—

Where flowers eternal spring from out the pregnant mold,
And pluméd fans and ferns in lush abandon grow,—

O, Robin, in this land so strangely fair to see,
Remember still your nest within the gray old tree.

O, Robin Pilgrim, to that far-off Mecca land,
To worship some dear saint in sweet, adoring praise,

I hear even here, to me by soft winds fanned,
Your message at the shrine as worshipful you raise

Your offering of song that fills the yielding air,
And makes the willing breeze a glad, triumphant prayer.

The clover sleeps a sullen, death-like sleep;
The ragweed stands a beggar on the plain;
The daisies tryst with summer idyls keep
Beneath the drifted snow and angry sleet and rain.

A" wait for thee, O Bird, to rouse them from their sleep,
Remember then the tryst which they so faithful keep.

Rural Rhymes

Your home-tree stands a specter in the snow,—
A grim and ghastly mem'ry of the past,
Its shuddering limbs swing creaking to and fro,
And add a haunting cadence to the blast!
O, truant bird, dost think the sad old tree
Longs for the blooming time, the summer days and
thee?

Come back to us; I, too, my homesick cry
Bid wind and water carry to thee on the blast;
Come back to us and fill the empty sky
With feastings of the song—full long hath been
our fast!
Dear Pilgrim Bird, come with thy cheering host;
When days are cold and drear we need our friends
the most.

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ASTOR, LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS



The Flicker on the Fence

The Flicker on the Fence

BETWEEN the songs and silences of the
flicker on the fence,
A-singing his old-fashioned tune, full of
meanin' and of sense,
I fall into a musin' spell sometimes of other days,
When things was mostly different, leastwise in
many ways;
And I hev a lonesome feelin' and a longin' fer
them times,
Which somehow fits exactly with the yellerham-
mer's chimes.
There's a kind of grace hangs over them—them
days of other years—
As makes a sighin' fer them next the best to
weepin' tears.

I'd like ter see the cradlers go wadin' through the
grain,
With ther sleeves rolled up and 'spenders off, and
sweatin' like the rain.
It's an old man's foolish notion, but I'd like right
well ter hear
The sound of scythes a-whettin', ringin' out so
sharp and clear,

Rural Rhymes

And see the men a-settin' down ter eat ther fore-
noon snack

Of doughnuts, and ter freshen up on home-made
apple-jack.

There was hurryin' then, and hayin' and har-
vestin', them days,

Was something like—but good old times, they
very seldom stays.

Now, the reaper, like some circus, comes a-prancin'
in the lot,

With more airs and fancy fixin's, and like enough
as not,

Afore it's time fer dinner—no odds how hot the
sun—

That machine will turn its tail and quit, and har-
vestin' is done!

There's no bushin' of the cradlers—no snack at
nine o'clock;

Fer the first you know the thing is done, and the
wheat is in the shock.

I listen' ter the clangin' till I hain't got eny sense,
And the only thing old-fashioned there, is the
flicker on the fence.

And hayin' hain't no better—it's done nigh 'bout
es soon—

With no hurryin', ner no frettin', ner grindin'
scythes at noon;

The Flicker on the Fence

Or rushin' out from dinner before it's one o'clock,
Fer fear the rain will ketch the hay before it's in
the cock.

There's no mowin' 'round a feller, and makin' him
feel mean,

Or pitchin' on the load so fast that the pitcher
can't be seen.

There's a ca'm now 'bout the hayin'—that ma-
chine, all striped and red,

Jest makes it look like most of us mout nigh as
well be dead:

A hitchin' up—a little ile—a mod'rate hayin' sun,
A patent rake and loader, and hayin's good as
done.

And corn-plantin's like it mostly, and fer me
there seems no need,

Unless it's fiddlin' after it, a-stickin' pun'kin-
seed;

Fer the planter's hifalutin', and don't take no
stock, you see,

In things like pun'kins, as have grown old-fash-
ioned, just like me.

The boys air off ter college, and the gals are
paintin' ware,

Or a-playin' the pianner, or a-"outin'" off some-
where;

Rural Rhymes

And I feel so kind of lon'some with the new
things round about,

And am like the taller candle, waitin' fer ter be
snuffed out.

I look around to find a sign that I hain't lost my
sense,

And get my bearin's when I hear the flicker on
the fence.

A-Workin' Out the Tax

I JINKS! this comes in handy, an' I'm for-
'ard to remark
That I feel keen as a brier an' as happy as
a lark;
Fer it is n't ev'ery day, Mariar, it's superfluous fer
to tell,
That right in cultivatin' corn there comes a
breathin' spell.
But Eaton's boy was 'long ter night, an' hollered
frum his load
As how the ole man wanted me ter work upon the
road;
An' the warnin's fer termorrer, an' nex' day, ef it's
clear,
An' yer can cacalate, Mariar, that John Henry will
be there.

He said as how that I should fetch a shovel 'long
with me,
But a tablespoon would do as well as fer as I can
see;
But it's best ter look like business, an' make a
show uv workin',
Tho' this wrinkle uv the road-tax is the derndest
kine o' shirkin'.

Rural Rhymes

Ole Brown 'll bring his grub-hoe, an' his pair o'
breakin' steers,
Tho' there hain't been a root ter grub fer more'n
twenty years.
An' Si Horner 'll fetch his maddick, but you'd
mighty quick, Mariar,
Guess he didn't cacalate ter set the Pidg'en creek
on fire.

An' Daddy Wheeler 'll be on hand, as sure as I'm
alive,
Ter play his ole bald-headed game uv not bein'
forty-five.
It comes I s'pose uv tyin' to a girl uv twenty-eight,
The sprucest kine of schoolmarm, when he was
sixty, straight.
Jim Wilson 'll bring his span o' mules (an' more'n
like, a drag),
To illustrate his lyin' an' pint a morrul to his brag.
An' Johnson 'll drive his team o' colts (they're
ole as me ter day),
But his "whoa'in'" an' their antics is a caution in
their way.

An' then there 'll be a raft o' boys (I guess I'll
take our Win,
Ter sort o' introduce him, as ye might say, break
him in),

A-workin' Out the Tax

Not one in five could earn their salt at any other
work;

But they're reckind all as full han's when it comes
ter count an' shirk.

There 'll be the same ole stories tole, an' all uv us
will listen,

As if 't was inspiration, an' our tools will dry an'
glisten

In one spot fer half an hour; an' when the yarn is
through,

We 'll fall to work like majors, for a minit, maybe
two.

An' the mud-hole that we're fillin' will be filled
our level best,

While a dozen potter aroun' it thick as bees about
a nest;

We 'll smooth it up, an' smooth it down, until
we're nigh a-faintin',

An' fix it nice an' scrumptious like as if we's
chromo-paintin'.

Then Jonas Doyle 'll mention that he's meltin' uv
his spade,

An' we 'll all strike out unanimous fer the nearest
lastin' shade;

Then Daddy Wheeler 'll remark, "In '22, one day,
The sun was bilin'," etc., an' give hisself away.

Rural Rhymes

Now, 'Rastus Wright 'll lie *his* lie, which never
had no sense,
An' the youngsters will be winkin' an' chawin'
slivers from the fence,
An' when he's done, we 'll laf an' laf as if our sides
would split,
Tho' if it ever had a pint, we 've never seed it yet;
An' 'Ras 'll think he's done it, and squint our eyes
ter catch,
An' chaw his leaf tubacker as if he's chawin' in
a match;
But his lyin' will be ketchin' fer ter onst will
Uncle Tim
Start off upon a canter; we know what to expect
uv *him*.

It 'll be his everlastin' ole steamboat yarn, ye know,
That ev'ry mother's son has heerd a hundred times
or so;
An' we 'll all set in carectin' (for we know it clean
by heart),
If he varies one dodgasted bit, or weakens on a
part;
An' when he's through, an' absent like, he gives
his hoe a rub,
Some one 'll ask him innercent tu p'int him out
the nub;

A-workin' Out the Tax

Then we'll talk about the weather, an' corn an'
price uv wheat,
An' flounder 'roun' oneasy like, till we strike a
stiddy heat.

But about *this* time Ole Ezra will cum along
a-stumpin'
From the tother gang o' workers, an' we'll all
begin a-humpin',
An' his ole bull's-eye he'll flourish (it hain't went
fer twenty years),
Then gaze up where the sun is, an' his eye will
wade in tears;
Then cool an' self-persest like, he'll cacalate it's
noon,
An' the horns will start a-tootin' an' hain't begun
too soon,
An' we'll santer home fer dinner an' ter water up
the stock,
An' prance aroun' to be in time fer work at wun-
ner o'clock.

There's a deal o' loud complainin' 'bout the bur-
den uv the tax,
But *this* hyere part I carry, just as slick as sealin'
wax,

Rural Rhymes

An' I wish some other duties that's 'roun' a fel-
low laid,
Wuz mixed a little freer with a-layin' in the shade.
An' I'm blamed if I do n't wish, sometimes, I
never had been born,
When I see my life means mostly a-cultivatin'
corn;
But I'll hev two days uv comfert, just a trifle to
relax,
A foolin' on the road, Mariar, a-workin' out the
tax.

Drivin' the Cows

IT be n't no wise half the fun
Them city folks 'most allers think,
A-drivin' off the cows ter feed,
Er to the crick ter let 'em drink.

Ef they was barefoot jest like me,
'N' stones 'n' briers layin' 'round,
They'd say some things a-drivin' cows
What be n't in Scriptor to be found.

They'd fin' ther toe nails hangin' loose,
'N' tempers more 'n likely riled,
'N' hear ther hifalutin' things
About the cows a little spiled.

There's Brindle, now, es looks es meek
Es catnip growin' by the fence,
But when et comes to drivin' her,
Seems like her hain't got common sense.

Rural Rhymes

Her 'll meach along, a-thinkin' like,
Then suddint strike off on a trot,
'N' all ther rest will follow her,
'N' go clean by the meader lot.

'N' Sary Jane is jest as bad,
Except her takes a different way;
Her minces 'long, 'n' loafes aroun',
Es if her owned the hull of day.

'N' then the rest they 'd kalcuate
They's es good a right to loaf es her,
'N' they 'll set in 'n' aggravate
Ontil ye jest kain't see 'em stir.

'N' Polly Ann goes by the gap
Likes ef her don't know what et means,
'N' all ther rest goes filin by,
'S ef not one knowd es much es beans.

'N' Sinderelly (what a name !
A city feller called her that),
Her 'll antic 'round 'n' fool about,
'N' like es not, kick off yer hat.

Drivin' the Cows

When you is slow, they 'se allers fast,
When you is fast, they 'se allers slow;
When you is idlin'-like 'nd ca'm,
Et's tlen they allers want ter go.

I'd like ter change a-drivin' cows
With them yer' chaps a month er two,
Ter drivin' hosses on ther cars—
I s'pose thet's what most uv 'em do.

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My Little Comrade Jim

Poems of Childhood

57

“Fot Would You Take”

SHE was ready for bed and lay on my arm,
In her little frilled cap so fine,
With her golden hair falling out at the edge
Like a circle of noon sunshine.
And I hummed the old tune of “Banbury Cross,”
And “Three Men Who Put Out to Sea,”
When she sleepily said, as she closed her blue eyes,
“Papa, fot would you take for me?”

And I answered, “A dollar, dear little heart,”
And she slept, baby, weary with play;
But I held her long in my love-strong arms,
And rocked her and rocked away.
O the dollar meant all the world to me,
The land and the sea and the sky,
The lowest depth of the lowest place,
The highest of all that’s high.

The cities with streets and palaces,
Their pictures and stores of art,
I would not take for one low, soft throb
Of my little one’s loving heart;

Rural Rhymes

Nor all the gold that ever was found
In the busy, wealth-finding past,
Would I take for one smile of my darling's lips,
Did I know it must be the last.

So I rocked my baby and rocked away,
And I felt such a sweet content,
For the words of the song expressed to me more
Than they ever before had meant;
And the night crept on and I slept and dreamed
Of things far too glad to be,
And I wakened, with lips saying close in my ear,
"Papa, fot would you take for me?"

Sunbonnet Land



WHEN I am weary and sad and full of
complaining,
And my heart lies a burden, untuned
and unstrung,
When I watch the dull sky that is raining and
raining,
And the songs of my singing seem every one
sung;
When my hands grow too tired and heavy for
working,
And my arms drop the burdens they have car-
ried so long,—
Then one thought in my life like a sunbeam comes
lurking,
Changing sorrow for gladness, giving soul to my
song.

'T is a face that I see, 'neath a little pink bonnet,
With tangled hair brushed by a careless brown
hand,
And it tunes every chord in my heart like a son-
net,
When I see this sweet face near,—my Fair Sun-
bonnet Land;

Rural Rhymes

For I call it this name, so that when I am dream-
ing

Of the heaven-land country that shall be by and
by—

Of the paradise place, fair beyond ever seeming—
I can keep the sweet visions each apart if I try.

Ah, my own fairy country, beneath the pink frill-
ings

Of the little sunbonnet where her hair tangled
lies,

Each golden lock weaving a web of strange thrill-
ings,

That clothes me in peace and in yearning sur-
prise ;

O browned, dimpled cheeks that the wind has been
kissing,

And planting its roses in its romping, wild
wake,—

I shall fancy some day from my life will be missing
Every kiss that the wind in its romping may
take!

O eyes that I love, in my fairy-land glowing,
In the shade of the sunbonnet, wide wondering
and blue,

As pure as the air when the clouds are a-snowing,
And to me ever loving and tender and true,

Sunbonnet Land

I covet the glances you give to the flowers,
I want every love-look that falls from your eyes,
That my life-waste may blossom as heaven-built
bowers,
And a glimpse I may catch of fair paradise
skies!

I fly to this refuge, when my soul is sore longing
For rest and for comfort from the cares that be-
tide me,
And, like white birds of promise, my heart is quick
thronging
With thoughts of my darling, and she seems
close beside me.
O face in the bonnet from my fond gaze half hid-
den,
From eyes tear-bedimmed—but my heart knows
no blindness;
And I feel when I cry and the face comes when
bidden,
That 't is all that I need—that 't is God's great-
est kindness!

By the Queen's Command

ROYAL, in dimples and gold-brown hair,
And lips ripe-red as a robin's breast,
And hands and feet as busy as birds
That carol and thrill over half-built nest,
Queen of my heart is this blue-eyed maid,
And many commands has she on me laid.

Tho' by far not as young as I one day was,
She bids me go down on my knees and hands
While she mounts on my back, and as untamed
steed,
I madly careen over carpet lands,
'Round hillocks of hassocks, 'twixt mountains of
chairs,
Through fringes of curtains and drapery lairs.

And anon with an eye to my future good,
Her heavy command she lays on me,
And bids me study, with ears fresh snapped,
The classical pages of A, B, C,
With their a-b ab, and c-a-t cat,
And d-o-g dog, and r-a-t rat.

By the Queen's Command

And again am I bidden to "be a bear,"
With a den in the darkest corner of all,
Where, deep in the maze of piano legs,
I must snap and snarl, and grovel and crawl;
And when her highness comes near the den,—
The dénouement is always then!

And when the riding and romping is done,
She bids me tell her a story or two;
And when they are finished I 'am asked to
"keep on,"

And I yield and do as I 'm bidden to do,
And I "tell" and talk till my mind is vexed
To know what to say or tell her next.

Then she puts her arms tightly around my neck,
And her baby lips issue their sweetest law:
"Love me always the same as you do to-night,
And take me up in your arms, papa."
And close to my heart she warmly creeps,
And my queen and my love now sweetly sleeps.

Polly-Pods

OUT in my fiel' of clover, which I 'm savin'
for the seed,
Amongst the brown heads standin', is that
awk'ard, gawky weed;
An' I laf, altho' I ought n't, when I see it growin'
there
A-crowdin' out the clover, like es if it owned a
share
Of the medder and its profits an' was welcome es
could be,
An' I knowed I'd leave it peaceful to nod 'n' grin
at me.
It's like a strappin' tomboy, with its manners all
left out,
An' useful jes' fer nothin' 'n' han'some jes' fer
stout;
But I leave it there—a beggar—only that it drinks
the best
Of the dew and eats the vittals that should go to
feed the rest.
I hain't the heart to hurt it, fer the "Polly" of
its name,
Keeps it tender in my feelin's; fer my gal hed jes'
the same.

Polly-Pods

I see her in the medder like es she was in them
days
'Fore the angels coaxed her rum me—an' they
must hed winnin' ways,
Fer I know my Polly loved me, an' nothin' here
below
Could hev made her leave me cryin', like my heart
would break, you know.
I could see her now a-standin', ef the tears 'd keep
away—
Yes, I nigh a'most can see her as she was, one
summer day,
A-loiterin' through the medder, 'n' a-steppin' here
and there
To pull the dead-ripe "pollys" and sow the smilin'
air
With the brown seeds an' the feathers; and they 'd
float off like a dream,
Er a bubble es was sleepin' on some idle, lazy
stream;
Then she 'd watch 'em goin' up'ard in a kind o'
wishful way—
But what my gal were thinkin' of, I kent, of
course, jes' say;
But when one night the angels my little peewee
took,
Her face was sweet with smilin' that same sweet,
yearnin' look

Rural Rhymes

She had that day in summer when she blowed the
polly-pods,
An' filled her arms with clover an' lim's of golden-
rods;
An' so I leave 'm growin', 'n' I reckon that they
make
My little Polly nearer, 'n' I love 'm for her sake.

The Phœbe-Bird



WHY do you seek to build, dear bird,
Within the porch on my window ledge?
Voices are many in tree and hedge,
That bid you come with a welcome word.

Places are waiting where swinging bells
Are swaying the tall flags to and fro,
Where roses blossom and hollyhocks blow,
And the air is sweet with asphodels.

The walnut beckons you to its arms;
The maple bids you to come and bide,
Where its sheltering leaves will safely hide
Your nest from your foes or hand that harms.

But build, dear bird, on my window ledge,
Bring mud and moss for your castle brave;
For me, as a tribute, the still air lave
With a rain of song, as a freehold pledge.

Look through the casement and see my nest,
My birdling with golden, flossy hair,
And say if ever was babe so fair,
As she with her face in mine soft prest?

Rural Rhymes

Gather white down for your birdling's bed,
While I cut a curl of this flossy hair
(Many there be, but few to spare),
To weave through your nest as a golden thread.

Little brown nun on my window sill,
The truth I can only guess the half,
Why your song brings tears and makes me laugh,
In spite of reason, in spite of ill.

Your tune, in my heart, some old thoughts stir
Of hopes once mine for the coming years;
And these, I guess, bring the foolish tears,
And the laugh—when I think how vain they were.

Sleep, Baby



SLEEP, baby, sleep!
No need thy cradle to swing,
For unto thy ear are voices dear
Of the angels whispering
Of heaven above, the realm of love,
The world of eternal spring.

Sleep, baby, sleep!
No more shall thy little hands creep
Into the face of thy mother, to trace
The soul of her love, to keep
As a gliding light, through the strange still
night,
Whose name is the land of sleep.

Sleep, baby, sleep!
Thy life was only a day;
But a thought of the years, with their joys and
tears;
But a gleam of sunlit spray—
A bird in its flight, through the dew-wet light,
In its paradise-onward way.

Rural Rhymes

Sleep, baby, sleep,
Never more to wake or weep;
God knoweth full best and giveth thee rest,
And thy soul will he safely keep.
In his kingdom, said he, shall the little ones be;
On his breast shall they sweetly sleep.

A Hurt at Heart



HE written words were like dagger-thrusts,
And they wounded and wounded me,
Till my eyes and soul were blind with
hurts

Of their silent cruelty.

"The baby's forgotten you," that was all;

My baby, my life, my heart,

Forgotten so soon; why, it seems to me

That only a day apart

I and my little one had been;

But then it was many more,

As the days are counted to make the years,

And the years to make a score;

But every night I had dreamed of her,

And had yearned in my great unrest

So hard, that it seemed to me

She had slept on my love-filled breast.

And the days—she was with me all the time,

Morning and night and noon,

And I never thought with my constant heart

She could forget so soon;

Rural Rhymes

That her baby life would go out from me
And her dear thoughts go astray,
And her baby love grow cold and dull
For me, who had gone away.

I reasoned wildly, I reasoned wrong
That one little heart intent
Would love, love on so sweet and true,
No matter what came or went;
And my life was rounded into a prayer,
A prayer that was deep and whole;
I prayed for my life and soul alway,
For she was my life and soul.

O baby, somewhere, some better day,
You will know how you held my heart;
For side by side we shall be some day
And never more go apart,—
Some day, somewhere, some better day,
Where eyes with no tears are wet,
My baby and I shall know how sweet
Is life where they never forget.

My Heart's Kingdom

IT seems to me, my little girl,
My wee, small, baby girl,
I could not live without you now,
Without the kink and curl
Of your dear head upon my breast,
Or laid against my face,
Where busy, heavy years have left
Deep there their care-made trace.

My arms reach out, my little girl,
My little baby girl,
To fold the dear, sweet burden,
And feel the kink and curl
Of the dear head drop upon my hands,
And hold your hands in mine.
O little one you can not know,
How much of mine is thine.


Awake, asleep, my little girl,
My God-giv'n little girl,
I feel upon my fevered face
That cunning kink and curl,

Rural Rhymes

And that soft unconscious touch,
Lighter than angels kneel,
Is more to me I sometimes think,
Than all else seen and real.

My lips, perchance, have strangers grown,
My precious little girl,
To hymn and praise; but when I feel
That golden kink and curl,
My anxious heart goes out to God,
Tearful with earnest prayer,
That he will keep my baby safe,
To me my treasure spare.

The New Old Story

HE story is old, yet forever new,
How out of regard affection grew,
And the crown of love on affection fell,
And two lives were wed ; 't is too old to tell
Of the troth-plight ring and the wedding-day,
And the new life lunched in the sweet old way.

A home, a hearth, and a little chair,
And a baby enthroned, with sun-touched hair,
A little grave, and a path worn smooth,
And a wearying ache no rest can soothe :
The story is old, yet how sadly new,
Of the little mound where the violets grew !

I look away into waiting space,
And all is filled with my baby's face :
Her voice is the only voice I hear,
And her little step sounds always near ;
In cradle or grave, where'er she be,
My little wee lamb is near to me.

I wait and wait, in a dumb still way,
Through the heavy night and the blarey day,

Rural Rhymes

And I can not think but one blinding thought,
That into my soul is run and wrought,
I want my darling with golden hair;
O Baby, come back ! is my only prayer.

I can not reason, I can not say
That the Father gives and he takes away;
I only know that I can not see,
Why my little one was not spared to me.
I can only look down in still despair,
And think of my babe in the coffin there.

My eyes are blinded, I can not see
The blessings and love still left to me;
And my heart is heavy as molten lead,
And throbs but one throb,—my baby is dead.
The story is old, but to me so new,
That it breaks my heart to believe it's true.

A Mayde I Knowe



WITHE one fayer mayde I am acquainte,
Withe braydes of hair hunge downe
her backe,

All tyde with bowes with worldlie knack,
(Which gyves her look of maydes y^t paynte;)
Y^e hue is of y^e rypened corne,
Or sunrise on a cloudless morne;
She mindes me greatly of a Sainte.

What manner of her eyes this mayde
Doth have, I am afeard toe telle;
They're browne, per-venture as y^e shelle
Which rounde y^e hazel meat is layde.
Thys muche I knowe, they looke at me,
And in them, alle y^e worlde I see,
And alle things else from me dothe fayde.

Her teethe are lyke y^e easterne Pearle,
(Which ye are mynded of in bookes;)
Or lyke whyte Stones within y^e brookes,
Or apple blowes y^e Wyndes doth hurle;
Her lippes, y^e hue ye frequente see,
Lyke rype fruite on y^e Cherrie tree,—
Soe greate the fayrness of this girl.

Rural Rhymes

Her stature is nott verie greate,
 (As measured by y^e plumbe and rule;)
 Butte reckoned bye thiss hearte of myne,
In stature she hathe notte a mayte;
 And though in years she be butte five,
 She dothe moste masterlie contrive
To holde my happiness and fayte.

She makes y^e sunshine of my daye,
 (And more than heavenly orbes dothe she
 Lyte up y^e wearie nightes to me,)
And makes my labour seeme butte play.
 How can a mayde butte barely five,
 I aske, so masterlie contrive
Toe fill one's life? I cannott say.

A Perfect Faith



Y darling kneeled down for her evening
prayer,
And out from her gown peeped her
little feet bare,
And a halo of light touched her golden hair,
And I thought of the dear Christ-child.
The moonbeams fell soft on the wee, little girl,
And lovingly lingered on dimple and curl,
And peace mocked the presence of tumult and
whirl,
And a holiness seemed to pervade.

Then arose the sweet words, "Dear God, every-
where,
Please listen to-night to a little girl's prayer:
Bless papa and mamma, and keep in thy care
All the folks that I love and I know;
And make them all happy, dear Father, I pray,
And help me to be a good girl every day;
And one thing more, God, I'd like awful to say,
But it may not be right if I do.

Rural Rhymes

I wish, Mr. God, that to-morrow you'd let
The blue, thirsty sky with clouds covered get,
And you'd ask them to rain a little mite wet,
For one who'd be glad if they would.
My papa, he brought me just only to-night,
A gossamer cloak and it fits me all right,
And I want to see quick if it's leaky or tight,
From the hem clean up to the hood.

And now, God, Amen; do n't forget what I said,"
And with heart full of faith, she slipped into her
bed,
And soon into dreamland her happy thoughts sped;
And anon, came a splash on the pane;
And all through the night and far into the day,
The hot, burning earth drank its fever away,
And be-cloaked and be-hooded, I heard my girl
say:
"I knew God would let the clouds rain."

Five Years Old To-day

AND how do you like it, as far as you've
gone,
Little woman of five years old to-day?

Have the years sped sweet as a summer's dawn

And never a cloud swept over your way?

Has Time counted gain and never a loss?

Has life been a "ride to Banbury Cross?"

Have your days been joy and your nights sweet
sl

Has never a care come lurking around

To trouble the heart of my little Bo-Peep,

And has sorrow my darling ever found?

Has there been a Boy Blue to blow on his horn:

"The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the
corn?"

Did ever a posy you picked, my heart,

Have a brier hidden to hurt and pain?

Did a soft caress ever sting and smart?

From a cloudless sky has there fallen rain?

Rural Rhymes

Is your cup still brimming—your porridge un-
spilt?

Has no rat found the "malt in the House Jack
Built?"

My five-year-old woman, heart of my heart,

Dear life of my life and soul of my soul,

May each coming year be only a part

Of many, to round a beautiful whole.

Dear Father of all—Thy Name hallowed be,

In my love, Thy kingdom hath come unto me.

Two Funny Little Braids



WO funny little braids just long enough to
meet,
And mingle in the ruffles round my
dainty baby's neck,
Fastened with a narrow ribbon in a cunning bow
complete,
Are to me two things so precious and so infinitely
sweet,
That I would n't think of swapping them for
diamonds by the peck.

They are yellow like the sunshine, that has come
straight from the sky,
With no clouds to steal its brightness or rain to
dim its sheen,
And they look so queenly cunning with their natty
ribbon tie,
And for things superbly funny they're the apple
of my eye,
And they fit her head completely as a crown
would fit a queen.

She's as proud as any duchess of these sunny
foolish strands,
And her fingers plait and thread them like they
were weaving gold,

Rural Rhymes

And I can't tell which is sweeter, the braids or
dimpled hands,
That among the gold are working out her majes-
ty's commands;
But they are fortunes piled on fortunes when
together they are told.

I watch my little woman, only six years old last
June,
As caressful she is braiding and unbraiding of
her hair,
And I think with sad regrettings, how very, very
soon
The years will gather in their arms so many
months of June,
That my precious baby woman will no longer
need my care.

Though I keep my face a smiling, my heart is full
of tears

While I watch my little maiden combing out
her sunny hair,

And my soul is strangely troubled with a father's
foolish fears

For my baby's waiting future, my maiden's coming
years;

But I give my precious treasure to the dear
God's loving care.

A Vandal



CAN see her in my garden from the door-
way where I stand,
Walking up and down the borders in a
cool, observant way,
With her stockings down at shoe-top and her bon-
net in her hand,
And her apron pockets bursting with pinky ap-
ple spray.
Her hair like lily pollen—such a gleamy yellow
bright—
Is crowned with bud and blossom from my
rarest, choicest lot,
And her very bangs are dripping, and her curls
are hid from sight
With the spoils the maid has gathered where'er
she lists or wot.

Like an empress in her parlor, a queen in her
boudoir,
She takes her pick of jewels to deck her hair or
dress,
Never questioning for a minute but what they
each were for
Her highness's disposal, and nothing more nor
less.

Rural Rhymes

She decapitates my pansies that I have coaxed
and petted up,
To steal a few days' marches on the halting sisterhood,
And as though a sickle cleaved them the smug,
trim buttercup
Falls a victim to this gleaner of iconoclastic
mood.

To the grass pinks in the border—a line of fringy
bloom—
Comes this devastating maiden with fell purpose
in her eye;
And the hollyhocks just budding—she calculates
how soon
They will be ready, grimly waiting for her to
cast their die.
Ah, my garden! Ah, my flowers! swept by this
tiny storm,
Wrecked daily by this cyclone just the bigness
of my girl!
And I watch its sure destruction and behold it reft
and lorn,
With its rifled treasures gracing her frock and
bib and curl.

A Vandal

Though she gathers every flower, I can not find
the heart

To call her from the garden or bid her hand to
stay;

My treasures are her treasures—the whole or any
part,

If the one I love but loves them,—’t is a father’s
foolish way.

My Little Comrade

SHE grows so slyly fast, this little maid of
mine;
Almost a woman now, and yet not even
nine.

Her cheeks are fair and full, her lips are plump
and red,

Her hair is boy-like shorn upon her shapely head.
I call her "Jim," my little comrade Jim,
A father's foolish way, an idle vagrant whim.

Happy the pewee bird with fledglings brown and
plumed;

So is my little girl with face full bright illumed.
With sweet content—no care nor marring fret,
Has left its sign of hurt upon its calmness yet.
Dear little heart! Dear little comrade Jim;
God with her kindly deal: thus do I pray to Him.

I grudge the smiling sun a single fond caress;
My love I liken to some great, strange selfishness
That rounds with peace my days and makes them
fair and good
With joy that owns its birth in this sweet father-
hood.

My Little Comrade

Dear little comrade mine, you can but vaguely
guess
How much with you was borne to me of blessed-
ness.

If she be spared to live, I know some day will
come,
A day when I shall stand as one a-stricken dumb,
When dearer ties than mine shall tempt her heart
from me,
And ties new-born to her, shall sweeter, stronger
be.
Her happiness is mine, and yet I would for aye,
That we might ever be just as we are to-day.

But hurting thoughts begone, and leave no hateful
sign
That you have ever marred one gracious minute's
time.
My little one is here—her kisses yet are wet
Upon my hands and face; why must I need to
fret?
God guide and keep my love! Beseechingly to
Him,
I pray for her I love—my little comrade Jim.

The Creed of My Little Jane



HAT question so tortured, so worried, so
vexed,
Its logic abstruse and its ethics perplexed ;
Its whys and its wherefores ; its yeas and its nays ;
Its sophistry taught ; its labyrinth maze
Of preaching and teaching, theories, deeds ;
Of "schools" of theology, "isms" and creeds,—
I cease from my striving to find my way out
In quest of an answer to quiet my doubt,
And reach forth my hand to rest on the head
Of my little girl, Jane, who is ready for bed.

With her brown chubby hands resting clasped on
my knee,
She murmurs a prayer with a child's constancy :
"We thank the dear God for thy love, and this day
Give us all that we need in thine own bestest
way ;
Forgive us our sins, and help us do right.
This is all now, I guess. Dear Jesus, good night."

Then with kisses half kissed, she slips into her
crib,
And I kissed her and kissed her again as I bid

The Creed of My Little Jane

Her sweet speed to dreamland, and somehow I see
How empty, how like a refined cruelty
Are the dogmas and doctrines that learnedly leaven
Our faith in a God and a Kingdom of Heaven
With doubt, and I question the way that carefully
 leads,
That gives us a stone for our great yearning needs.
Why keep rolling stones from sepulchers dim
In search of a God, when lo! even Him
You seek is beside you? My babe holds my creed,
And the God of my little one is all that I need.

My Little Bo-Peep



MY Little Bo-Peep is fast asleep,
And her head on my heart is lying;
I gently rock, and the old hall clock
Strikes a knell of the day that's dying.
But what care I how the hours go by,
Whether swiftly they go or creeping?
Not an hour could be but dear to me,
When my babe on my arm is sleeping.

Her little bare feet, with dimples sweet,
From the folds of her gown are peeping,
And each wee toe like a daisy in blow,
I caress as she lies a-sleeping;
Her golden hair falls over the chair,
Its treasures of beauty unfolding;
I press my lips to her finger tips
That my hands are so tightly holding.

Tick, tock, tick, tock! You may wait, old clock,
It was foolish what I was saying;
Let your seconds stay and your minutes play,
And bid your days go all a-Maying.

My Little Bo-Peep

O Time! stand still—let me drink my fill
Of content, while my babe is sleeping;
As I smooth her hair, my life looks fair,
And to-morrow—I may be weeping.

A Harvest Rosary

QUEEN GEORGE of my kingdom came in
from the fields,
Where the wheat stood in shocks, like a
village of tents;
Her hands were thick stamped with berry-stain
seals,
While her calico apron was hanging in rents;
The kinks were all out of her wonderful bangs,
And a thick little braid down her back meekly
hangs.

In one hand she carries some red clover blows,
Sweet as summer-made honey fresh cut from
the hive;
And the other hand held—what it would not dis-
close—

A secret whose import I could not contrive;
For under her apron, quite hiding the best,
Lay one dear little hand, like a bird in a nest.

Then close in the arms that wait ever for her
She steals with her blossoms and secret so deep;

A Harvest Rosary

And I wait long to guess what the sweet meanings
are

Of the kisses she scatters so thick on my cheek,
And the red clover blossoms held under my nose,
And the hand 'neath the apron she will not disclose.

Then she said, while the kisses yet fell on my face,
"The posies for you and the berries for me."
Then out from the folds of her pink hiding-place
She held up the secret I waited to see:
'T was a raspberry string, with a grass for a thread,
New picked from the bushes all purple and red.

"Now count them for me as you did once before."
So I took up her treasures—for so I must
needs—
And I told to my darling my heart's tender love,
As a monk in his cloister might tell off his
beads.

This is the love that I bear you, my heart;
And this is a hope that we never may part;
And this is a wish that each cunning curl
May never grow less on the head of my girl;
And this, should they ever grow silvery white,
That they always be beautiful, just as to-night;

Rural Rhymes

And this is a hope that your loving, glad eyes
May always be blue as the summery skies;
And this, should time steal their brightness away,
They may always look beautiful, just as to-day;
And this, that forever the dimples and red
Of your cheeks may be spared from bitter tears
shed;

And this, should the roses and dimples depart,
They may glow with a beauty that comes from the
heart;

And this, that your hands, that I hold now so
tight,

May grow helpful and loving and strong to do
right;

And this is a song with a sweet-flowing tune,
That your life be as bright as a clear day in June;
And this is a prayer that the steps of my love
May be guided and watched by the Father above;
And this is Amen; for the beads are all told,—
My picture of silver and apple of gold.

Sally's Pictur



YAAAS, thet is the pictur uv Sally,
Our four-year-old gal, ye know,
What died last year uv a fever,
'N' giv us orl sech a blow.

The pictur aint haf es pretty
Es Sally wus; but ye see
No likeness c'u'd be es han'sum
Es she was to pap 'n' me.

The feller es took it said to her,
"Set straight 'n' throw up your chin,
'N' look right at this hyere a mite,
'N' don't move till I tell ye whin."

But Sally was 'fraid 'n' shy-like,
'N' begun fer ter whimper low,
Whin her pap sed, "Cum hyere, my chick'n,"
'N' you should ha' seen her go!

'N' he gathered her up 'n a secont,
'N' looked so content 'n' rich,
With her face stuck right into his'n,
Till you could n't tell which was which.

Rural Rhymes

'N' she was a-huggin' him awful,
 'N' wearin' a lovin' look,
When the man sot his queer contraption,
 'N' then's when the picter was took.

My Foolish Song

NOW tell me, little sweetheart mine,
Some soft, sweet words to melt and
rhyme,

And make a song to sing to you,
When daylight dims and falls the dew,
When mother-birds sing low their song,
And Baby's bed-time comes along.

The words they can not be too sweet;
For love and love must meet and meet
In every line, and every thought
I'd have with tenderest accents fraught;
And all the heart and soul may know
Of love, must through the verses go.

Now, Baby, lay your face in mine,
And in my hair your fingers twine,
And—Baby, Birdie, Darling Heart,
There are no words that can impart
The joy, the rapture of my soul,
'Tis perfect rhyme, a poem whole.

A Bunch of Marigolds



LITTLE maiden, "tiptoe fine,"
With hair of gold and eyes that shine
Like two bright stars, and cheeks as red
As phloxes blushing in their bed,
Steals to my side,—her wee hand holds
A bunch of glowing marigolds.

'I brought them just for you," she said,
And like a gleam of light she sped
And left her trophies by my chair,
Scarce sunnier than her golden hair;
And with her sped my labored rhyme,
And but these thoughts would beat in time.

O, foolish little maiden mine,
I see you loitering in the walk,
Full ankle-deep in scenty thyme,
And bending down a hollyhock
To catch a burly bumble-bee
Within a deep and dusty cup,
Who stopped to see what he could see,
And take a tiny nectar sup.

A Bunch of Marigolds

And now I see you where the bells
Of columbine are swinging low,
Where the butterfly a secret tells,
And blooms the air with gleam and glow.
I see my little maiden put
Her face deep down among the pinks
And bend the grass with tiny foot,
While of the sweets she drinks and drinks.

I see her creeping to the nest
Of Mrs. Pewee, deftly made
With moss and hair the very best,
Deep in a sheltering lilac's shade.
I hear her say, "Good morning, ma'am;
How is your children all to-day?
Has Mr. Pewee gotted from
The market where he flied away?"

I see her peeping through the fence,
And looking wistful down the road;
O, little maid, you know not whence
Its windings lead—how great the load
So many carry on that way!
Be thou content to bide within
The gate that prisons you to-day,
And inward swings from care and sin.

Rural Rhymes

And all day long I see this maid
A-flitting here and romping there;
A messenger of sun in shade,
And in the sun a vision fair.
I can not write, I can not think;
For one sweet thought my spirit holds,
And binds it fast with love-wrought link
To one who brought my marigolds.

My Boy is Dead



Y little boy is dead!" To you, dear
friend, that means
Only the early setting of one bright,
flickering star,
Not even missed on earth amid the busy scenes
That crowd upon each other in constant fret
and jar.
We live and die so fast; one sorrow seems so
small,
We scarce can stop to shroud our dead ones with
a pall.

"My little boy is dead!" but O! to me, my
friend,
It means to me my life has stopped just at the
zenith hour,
And all the coming years with midnight shadows
blend;
And though I seek for day with manhood's
earnest power,
I see no light—the brightness all hath fled,
And life's weird sorrow clad: "My little boy is
dead!"

Rural Rhymes

I see him in my sleep, and then I fold him warm,
Close to my yearning heart, and am full satisfied.
I think 'tis but a dream that death my boy can
harm,
And but an idle tale that he hath one day died.
In rapture I awake, and lo! the cruel tread
Of thoughts come clanking on: "My little boy is
dead!"

My days are tortured dreams, of gladness naked
reft;
The sun which made them glad has reached its
setting time,
And naught but sullen clouds upon the sky is left;
And though I scan the arch, I see no kindly sign
Of light or golden gleam to pale the blackness
spread
Like palls upon my world: "My little boy is
dead!"

I feel that I must rob the grave of its sweet dead;
That I must see again that face I loved so well;
That I must feel once more upon my breast his
head,
And in his listening ear must tell again and tell
Him how I loved—I loved him. O, my boy!
Light of my light and joy of all my joy!

My Boy is Dead

Some day, my kind, good friend, your words may
cheer my heart,

And give me strength and hope to face the
coming years;

To do the best I can—to do the best, my part;

But not, O not to-day! The blinding flood of
tears

Hides from my soul and sight the words so kindly
said.

My grief my comfort is: "My little boy is dead!"

He giveth and He taketh: O, I know and feel

The words of sweet compassion you would say;
To me they seem so vague, so empty, so unreal,

They fall like idle sounds upon my ears to-day.

My faith is here, but hope its wings hath spread

To seek the one I loved: "My little boy is dead!"

My Dream of Dreams

I DREAM of my little wee baby,
My little one turned of two,
With chubby hands soiled and russet,
And little feet out at shoe ;
With hair kissed awry and rumpled,
And peeping down into her eyes,
Which to me are my hope and heaven,
And the gates of my paradise.

I feel in my dreams the fingers
Of my baby thread through my hair,
That oft in my restless waking
Have stilled, as a hymn or prayer,
The pain that was throbbing through me,
And hurting me like a wound,
And making my life a discord,
And an instrument all untuned.

And I dream how her arms slip downward,
Till my head lies upon her breast,
And the shelter is sweet and restful,
And warm as a robin's nest ;

My Dream of Dreams

And I cry on her little bare bosom,
And pray again and again
That the Father, who knows my sorrow,
Will shelter my bird from pain.

I wake, and my arms are empty,
And I know it was but a dream;
But my soul is as white with rapture,
As lilies in meadow stream;
And I feel in my hair her fingers,
And her kisses upon my cheek,
And I pray in a sacred silence,
For my soul is too glad to speak.

Dearest one, sun of my daytime;
Sweetest one, star of my night;
Precious one, best of my treasures;
Brightest one, light of my light,—
Be with me, though I am dreaming
All the long night-time through,
Until I shall wake some morning,
And find you are with me, true.

My Kingdom



HE winds her arms tightly about my neck,
Her dear little arms with dimples kissed
over,
And her baby breath touches my lips and my
cheeks,
As sweet as the scent of a summer-bloomed
clover;
Then she kisses me over and over and over,
And each kiss is as sweet as a white-blossomed
clover.

All nightcapped my princess creeps into her bed,
And tho' gone but a minute, I know she is
sleeping,
And I feast on the slumber smiles lighting her
face,
While I sit by the window, my restful watch
keeping;
Like a robin wing-weary, my bird is a-sleeping,
And I sit in content, my restful watch keeping.

To-morrow may come, as to me they have come,
With frettings and cares the full hours to leaven,

My Kingdom

And the earth will fast fetter my hands and my
soul,

And the farthest star will seem nearer than
Heaven—

Yet no touch of the earth can these watch hours
leaven,

For I sit by the gate of my Kingdom of Heaven.

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The Swallows Skimmin'

Dialect Poems

My Yearly Verses



HEY may laugh as feel like laughin',
And may chaff as feel like chaffin',
It do n't make no odds in anywise to me;
Fer I always feel like singin'
When the spring-time comes a-swingin'
Of its arms, so kind of tickled-like and free.

Ev'ry year the same old notion
Comes a-tidin', like the ocean,
That I never felt so glad for spring to come;
And the feelin' 's new and shinin'
As a cloud's red, golden linin',
And I could n't fer my life be broken up or glum.

I watch the swallows skimmin'
Through the sky, like they was swimmin',
And I thinks, thinks I, they never flew like this!
And the robin pipin' meller
Jest completely makes a feller
Feel more 'n full of tickledness and bliss.

And the flock of blackbirds yellin',
And their private business tellin',
Is a sound I always reckon on a store;

Rural Rhymes

And I feel while I 'm a-list'nin',
And the plow p'int idly glist'nin',
That I never heard a blackbird sing afore.

Ev'ry spring the air feels cleaner,
And the meader grass looks greener
Than I can recollect it did last year;
And the posies rubbin' open
Their eyes, and kind of gropin'
Fer the sunshine, never looked so pert and queer.

With the spring there comes a feelin'
Like some one was slyly stealin'
All the meanness from my life, and puttin' in
Where it was some gracious token,
Brand-new things fer old and broken;
So I write my song, and think it no great sin.

Cheewink



THE catbird sets on the willer lim',
As is bendin' over the run ter drink,
And yapps what I reckon es seems ter him
A wonderful gallus song—cheewink !
Et hain't no meanin' es I kin make out—
Et may be Latin' er elsewise Greek ;
But he sets there a-singin' his tune like he mought
Hev a dozen pianners inside of his cheek.

But the brook likes the tune, an' goes laffin' a laf
Right under et, heartier, leastwise, so I think ;
An' et keeps up a kind of a banterin' chaff
Fer ter hearten the singin'—cheewink, cheewink !
An' the blue johnny-jump-ups (they allus mind me
Of my little gal's eyes so lovin' an' sweet),
They smiles like a human when they hears on the
tree
The catbird a-fillin' the air complete.

And the cowslips they grin, 'n' git yellere yet,
Like es ef they was blushin' a new-fangled blush,
When they sees the "cheewink," in the willers
rain-wet,
Er-hoppin' about in the dead elder-brush.

Rural Rhymes

An' the sweet-william tops, all a-bendin' with blows,
Nods back'ards 'n' for'ards a-keepin' of time
To the chirk little tune as it mellery flows,
Out inter the air like a short-meter'd rhyme.

I hoe an' I listen, 'n' listen 'n' hoe;
That bird in the willer a-pipin' away
Makes my worries go fast, an' my pleasures go
slow,
'N' the sun ter shine clear on the cloudiest day.
Et 's a mighty small thing, I suppose, fer ter make
A man ter feel happy, folks most like may think,
But fer me ter be cheerful, et do n't allus take
More 'n the cat-bird a-singin', cheewink, chee-
wink!

Vhen Me und Mine Gretchen Sings



YOU'D a-laugh yourself doouble a coople of
dimes

For to me und mine Gretchen hear sing;
Her tune vas so schweet as a meeting-house chime,
Und sounds like the sky jays in spring,
While my voice is like noddings dot music is like,
Somedings more as a hammer schumping onto a
spike.

But mine Gretchen says sing—"Sing, now, fadder,
mit I,"

Und I mind (es I should), und opens mine head,
Und she laughs, und she laughs, till she's ready to
chry,

Und den like a bird mit its little wings spread,
She raises her tune, und blays mit the words,
Like a robin vas blaying mit her nest full of birds.

Do, ra, me ("Fadder, sing!"), und I sing, do, me, ra,
Und I rastle and mop dem all over mine moud,
Den she stops mit her hands on her sideses to say
Dot I preak de house down mit mine dalking so
loud,

Rural Rhymes

Und she says (werry schweet, mit somedings I see
In her eye), "Now, fadder, *sing* dose noteses for
me."

Und I laughs, und she laughs, und I snatch up
mine bird,

Mit her do, ra, me, fa, und her fa, sol, la, se,
Und I ghive her a kiss for each nix-fershtay word,
Und she trows dem all back youst so quickly
to me!

O, Gretchen, mine pewee, your fadder can't sing,
But he knows how to loove you youst so good as
a king.

Truer'n Steel

THE JAYBIRDS



LEANIN' on the bar-post, an' a-thinkin'
fer a minit,
An' shellin' fer the chickens a ear'r
corn or so,—

The air es dry es fodder an' the wind with winter
in it,

The cracks atween the shingles plugged up with
early snow,—

I hear the jays a-hollerin', a-jokin' and a-laffin',
A-rilin' of each other with their braggy, sassy
chaffin'.

Not a pewee ner a bluebird ken be seen aroun'
the diggins,

An' the catbird up 'n' sneak'd away a month
ago,

An' the kildeer in the stubble, with dandy frills
and triggins,

Hes shied away along the rest fer fear o' snow.
But the jaybirds ain't no cowards, an' so they
keep on stayin',

Jest es perk an' jest es sassy's if 't was only hayin'.

Rural Rhymes

Ther robbings, so like humans—when yer posies
stop a blowin',
An' the berries thet they like er all gobbled
down,
Strike out'n leave ye lonesome, with the days a
shorter growin',
An' the sun but faintly smilin' et ye through a
frown.
But the jaybird stays right by ye—es one es
shows a likin'
Strongest fer ye when the rest hes got ye corner'd
an' a-strikin'.

When I cut fer the cornfiel' fer a lonesome day
a-huskin',
I scarcely git a shock throw'd down fairly ter
begin,
'Fore the jaybirds come a-tearin' 's if they's jest
a-bustin'
Fer ter help me out 'n quick-like from the hurry
I am in.
An' they holler et each other—keep a-whoopin'
an' a-yelpin',
An' makes me chirk an' cheerful, which is good
a'most as helpin'.

Truer 'n Steel

Ef I c'u'd write sum verses handy, like I've seen
them printers,

An' make a tune as nice fer them as Mrs. Jinny
Lind,

They sh'u'd both be 'bout the jaybird, a-loafin'
through the winters,

An' mixin' up their yawpin' with snow an'
freezin' wind.

It's easy 'nough in summer, when the sky is blue
an' glowin',

Ter be singin'—but it's different when the same is
black 'n' snowin'.

Mis' Jacob James O'Hara

Sary Jane Thompson is my name,
U. S. my nation;
Puckerbrush my dwellin' place,
Kokomo my station.

—*From Sary Jane's Reading Book.*



THAT was a good spell ago, Sary Jane,
More'n twenty roun' years, I reckon,
Since I read them lines in yer readin' book
An' I thought a right smart speck on.

Ye then, dear heart, as ye sot in school,
A-readin' an' ritin' an' cipherin',
With yer hair fallin' down like sun on your slate,
While I sot fernenst ye a-triflin',

I was tryin' ter figger what made me feel
So queer when I looked at you'ns;
(That feelin' as common as lambs in May
I afterwards foun' to we'uns.)

An' one noon, ye know, when the boys an' gals
Wus down in the holler a-slidin',
An' me an' you wus loiterin' along,
I got a right smart confidin';

Mis' Jacob James O'Hara

An' I laid the hull matter afore ye then,
Like a map—with its mountings fer craters,
Its oceans fer ships, an' its towns fer folks,
An' its plains fer a-raisin' taters;

An' I wus goin' ter tell ye as how my life
Would be like that mounting afire,
Where no taters would grow, ner no corn get ripe
(An' then I braced up ter ye nigher);

An' my plannin' wus gone every stiver to wunst,
As yer dress kind o' brushed agin me,
An' ye slid yer hand inter mine an' said:
"The ole-fashion way ter win me

Is good 'nough, Jacob, I reckon, fer me;
Jest airnestly say that ye love me."
An' I said it to wunst; an' the wintry sky
Jest turned to a summer above me.

An' Sary Jane Thompson wus n't yer name
But fer a short spell after;
An' now I kin scarcely hear what I say
Fer the noise uv the chilurn's laughter.

Rural Rhymes

An' was n't that day a happy day,
So uncommonly chirk an' merry,
When ye swopped yer name in yer readin' book
Fer Mis' Jacob James O'Hara?

Mine Liddle Ghel's Fadder



WHEN he coomes himself oup from de
taterses field,
Mit his hoe schtanding over his back,
His chug in his hant und his pail for his grub,
He sees through the rail fence's crack
His leedle shmall ghel, mit a schmile all for him,
Und he feels him so happy as never was been.

Und he trows de hoe down an' de chug und de
pail,
Und grabs oup dot leedle ghel sweet,
Und he kisses her face, und he kisses her hand,
Und he kisses her liddle bare feet;
Und he tinkes himself to, "I'm so rich as can be;
Richer more as a king: dot's de matter mit me."

He forgets right away all his droubles und dings,
Und his worries grows drowsy und schtill;
He dond give a cent uf de tater be schmall
Und seldom und tin in de hill;
Uf de wedder be clear, or it rain all de day,
Id noddings makes oud to him, now ony way.

Rural Rhymes

You'd tink him to see, that he half the town
owned,

Ven he steps off so lofty und schmart,
Mit a look his face on like a chromo, but schtill
'Tain't noddings to wat's in his heart;
Mit that ghel on his back in her pooty blue frock,
Und conversing away mit her schmall noddings
talk.

Dot fadder of hers ain't so good as a saint,
But you bet you, when dot leedle elf
Bes loafing around very close his side to,
He feels cranky und proud of himself;
For de good und de heaven und de prayers und
amen
Coomes into his heart very numersome then.

I reckons he dinks dere was never a ghel
Youst so sweet as dis Gretchen of his;
Und I can't argufy, fer to dink youst dis way
I o expose is his right und his biz.
Every heart has its loove, vot it looves most und
best,
Und my leedle ghel's fadder is youst like de rest.

Thanksgivin' Day



SWING open the gate as wide as you may,
An' keep it swinging till all are through,
Till ev'ry child that the old house knew
Is under its roof for Thanksgivin' Day.

An' open the house from top to toe,
An' run it over with girls an' boys,
An' fill ev'ry inch with singin' an' noise,
An' make the air with the laffin' blow.

The kittle is hangin' upon the crane,
An' the coals are huggin' it to their breast,
An' it looks like a crow on a golden nest,
An' the steam is risin' like scented rain.

The shelves in the pantry are loaded down
Till they bend in the middle with things to eat,
The goldenest pies an' the juiciest meat,
The spiles of the farm, an' the trophies of town.

There are fifty pies, an' not a one less,
Apple an' pumpkin, berry an' mince;
Sech a raft of eatin', I hain't seen since
Last Thanksgivin', I verily guess.

Rural Rhymes

The cellar is laffin' for very fun
At the plenty that 's hid in its scanty light;
The apples and turnips are packed so tight
You could n't squeeze in scarce another one.

An' the kittle is bilin' upon the coals,
Whilst the table is reachin' from door to door,
An' loaded down till the kitchen floor
Jest fairly aches with the weight it holds.

Of days that are good, 'Thanksgivin' is best
To me leastwise it has allers seemed so;
With its head in the clouds an' its feet in the
snow,
Of all days 'Thanksgivin' is bunkumest.

It's kind of old-fashioned an' plain, you see,
An' hain't a burstin' with frills an' airs;
An' it hain't perticular with who it fares,
The President man, or plain folks like me.

The children are here as hain't been here
(Leastwise the heft), since a year to-day,
But they all seem to kind o' find their way
Back to the farm, this time of the year.

Thanksgivin' Day

An' the kittle that sings on the red hot coals
Is bilin' the fare for Thanksgivin' Day,
An' the sound of its toothsome roundelay
Is one that my mem'ry forever holds.

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ASTOR, LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS



Easter Lilies

**Poems of Sentiment, Love, and
Devotion**

Reuben and Nancy

NOW Reuben and Nancy were man and wife,
And richer than any one else in the
town,

They dwelt in a house that was big and white,
While the rest about, were little and brown;
And they were the envy for far and near,
Which always seemed to me very queer,

Their barn was as big as a meeting-house,
With a gilded rooster upon the top,
And every one else, in the town, but me—
With envy run over—would look and stop,
And wish that their barn were as big and red;
But, bless me! I never a word once said.

And their house was large, as I said before,
And as fine as a house could well be made;
Perfect from cellar to garret, all,
From the china cupboard to the window-shade;
And it smelt of dried pinks and spicy mint,
And there was n't a speck of dust or lint.

Rural Rhymes

And the rooms were as still as a harvest field,
When the hands are taking a lunch, you know;
They liked them that way, of course, no doubt,
But I never thought, I would like them so:
And every one envied their house, but me;
But exactly why, I never could see.

There was n't a chick nor a child about,
To ransack the barn with hurrying legs,
To climb over beams, and jump on the mows,
And frighten the hens from new-laid eggs.
O, their barn wore always an air of state,
But looked to me, mean, instead of great.

Now, Reuben and Nancy, they died at last,
And no one mourned that I ever heard;
They had lived alone, and for themselves,
Scarce giving away e'en a kindly word;
And the house and the barn were lone and reft,
And they were all of the twain 't was left

They had their riches; so too, had I!
Mine was a cottage, vine-cumbered and brown,
With a smiling hearth, and a bit to sup,
And children a-plenty to tear it down;
And children a-plenty with nimble legs
To hunt my barn over for new-laid eggs.

Reuben and Nancy

And some day when I die, some one will care;
Some one will cry for a face that is missed,
And some one will long in a yearning way
For the lips to kiss back, so often kissed;
So I never envied them; this was why:
Because they were not half as rich as I.

For Christ's Sake



ESSENGERS white winged heavenward
speed

To tell how one sweet deed was done,

A kindly act that to Christ won,
A hardened heart, and planted seed
For higher living, holier need.

A flash is laggard in its flight,
'Twixt earth and sky, compared to this;
When for a sin some holiness
Is nobly gained; like thrice-winged light,
The news speeds Godward in its flight.

High heaven and God come near to bless;
No space can They and us divide,
When day by day are multiplied,
Sweet deeds of tender graciousness.
Lo! Heaven and God come near to bless.

Sing to Me

SING to me, mother, to-night, to-night,
Sing to me, mother, once more,
As you used to sing in the old, old time,
In the hallowed days of yore;
And let my head rest on your dear old lap,
Where so often before it has lain;
Sing to me, mother, to-night, to-night,
Sing to me, mother, again.

Many the years that have come and gone,
And are dead in the grave-strewn past,
Since the day I looked on your dear old face,
And heard your tones the last.
Your cheeks are a little sunken grown,
And your hair is of snowy white,
But your voice has its sweetness, its cadence still;
Sing to me, mother, to-night.

In this battle of life, in this world of work,
Mothers know best, I ween,
How hard it is for a man to keep
His life ever pure and clean;

Rural Rhymes

But your voice and your prayers have gone out
with me,

And helped me to do the right,
But there's many a pain I fain would soothe;
Sing to me, mother, to-night.

There is rest for the weary, O God be praised!

Rest and for evermore,
Over the Beautiful Hills, you say,
On the strand of the Shining Shore.
Sweet are your blessed words to my heart,
Bringing me joy and light;
Sing to me, mother, once more, once more,
Sing to me, mother, to-night.

The Children's Part



HERE is never a hand so weak and small,
If it be but a willing one,
But into its palm some task will fall,
To be sweetly and wisely done,—
Some work that none other could do so well
As the one in whose hand the little task fell.

There are little griefs that a loving heart
Will ever be glad to share;
The bearing for some in their sorrow a part,
Too heavy alone to bear,
Shall be kept in remembrance by One who knows
How heavy to bear are some griefs and woes.

A cup of cold water a child may give
To the stranger beside the gate,
Though a simple act, it may always live,
While deeds that are counted great
May be forgotten and lost from sight
In oblivion's silent and starless night.

Christ rested his hands on each little head
In blessing; but who may know
But that touch gave strength in the hour of dread
When he drank of his cup of woe;

Rural Rhymes

That the thought of the children encloded his
heart

And made him stronger to bear his part?

With their hands in heaven and feet on earth,

I count the help of a little child

As something akin to God's dear worth;

For a love so pure and undefiled

Must have come from heaven, and near the throne

Where he calls the children his loved and own.

My Friend



HERE was not a great amount of foolishness about him,
And but little of that stuff such as poets
use for rhymes;
And in some respects he might be termed peculiar,
And positively eccentric oftentimes.

He had a way of sizing up a fellow—
Of measuring him, his heart, his good, his bad—
Then according to him all that he was worth;
This was a striking peculiarity he had.

He had not by any means a cunning lip at speech,
And used his words with utter lack of grace;
But, notwithstanding, I have seen him more than
once
Bring gladness to a darkened, troubled face

By simply, eloquently putting down his hand
Into his breeches pocket very low,
And bringing up a shining, soulful dollar,
When, so to speak, a friend was broke, you know.

Rural Rhymes

He was not a man who prayed a gifted prayer,
Or sought for help when he could do alone
A thing he'd undertaken; but I've *seen* him
 make a prayer
'T would move a heart as stubborn as a stone.

His manners were not polished overmuch—
At least, were cast in rather clumsy mold;
But deeds of his were master works of grace,
 And shone like wrought and doubly-burnished gold.

I claimed not many friends (more, likely, than I
 had);
All right were some—some only to pretend;
But I felt richer—aye, richer than a mine—
Because my friend claimed me truly for his
 friend.

Grandmother's Barometer



WHEN Grandmother's needles go clickety-clack,
And she primly sits up to her chair's high back,

And the yarn fast unwinds in her ample lap,
And the needles shoot into her sheath with a snap,

We know she is thinking of days gone by,
When she was as sprightly as you or I;
And her needles keep time to her bright day-dream,

And halt but a second while she turns a seam;
Then away they go—her thoughts keeping pace,
But shining no brighter than grandmother's face.

When the yarn slowly creeps from the lessening ball,

And her head falls away from the chair-back tall,
And the needles move softly and still as a dream,
And tarry and halt over every seam,

We know she is thinking of life's midland,
When pleasure and care traveled hand in hand;

Rural Rhymes

And her needles move slowly—'t is now no race
To keep far ahead of her thought's slow pace,
While she calmly looks up in smiling surprise,
And tears are soft gleaming in grandmother's eyes.

When the ball rolls away, far out on the floor,
And grandmother's hands drop lower and lower,
Till they rest with her stocking a-down in her lap,
'T is a sign that grandmother will soon take a
nap;

Then she settles "for good" her cap of soft lace,
And the spectacles drop from her dear wrinkled
face;

Then grandmother sleeps, and we tiptoe about,
And close the door soft as we go in and out,
And lower the shades; then each one slyly creeps
Like a mouse from the room, while grandmother
sleeps.

So grandmother's knitting we watch, every one
(As weatherwise folk watch the moves of the sun),
To tell if the day be unpleasant or fair,
As she sits slowly rocking in her old arm-chair.
When her needles glide fast, the weather is fine,
And her thoughts brightly glow as rare-vintaged
wine;

Grandmother's Barometer

When they move slow and halt, the day has its
rain,
And grandmother's thoughts have their cloud-rifts
of pain;
But when they stop still and her ball rolls away,
The weather has cleared, and fair is the day.

Lilies of Easter



FAIR Easter lilies—white soul of the
flowers!

A baby's caress, soft awakened from
sleep—

The heart of the springtide, too joyous to weep—
A smile of the angels on the lips of the hours!

O white Easter lilies, with the badge of the cross,
The victory sign on the grave of our loss!

Roll away the gray stone from the sepulcher door;
Cease from grieving and crying, O women and
men!

The Christ is not there, where he lately hath
been;

The garments of death only lie on the floor.

The Christ hath gone forth; he hath risen
to-day.

Strew lilies on lilies in his glad outward way.

He hath risen and fled from the gloom of the
grave;

Our Christ, with his passion, hath gone on
before.

Cease crying, O men, at the sepulcher door!

Lilies of Easter

He hath risen to-day—let the white lilies wave;
He hath drunk to the dregs of death's bitterest
wine,
But is born into life—eternal—divine.

O, cross and the grave! O, victory won!
Bear unto us all a lesson to-day,
That our pathway to God tends this cruel, sad
way;
But after the journey is patiently done,
The face of our Christ will shine as the sun,
As he tenderly leads out of sorrow and strife,
Where white lilies bloom by the river of life.

The Risen Christ



WHY stand amazed, dumb, at the sepulcher
door?

Why weep for the Christ, O women
and men?

The stone is thrown down, to be raised nevermore,
And the garments of death only strew the cold
floor;

The Christ is not there, where he lately hath
been.

Cease, cease from your crying, O women and men!

From the world to the cross was a weary, sad way;
From the cross to the grave, a path wet with
tears;

The sun in the sky only blurring the day;
A weeping few, mantled in sable and gray,
And a weeping throng looking far away to the
years,

With hope blindly groping 'mid wailings and
tears.

O cross, with its cruelty! O death, with its sting!
O sepulcher, 'reft of its dear, precious dead!
The belov'd of our God—the gift of a King,
For a sin-heavy world his sad offering;

The Risen Christ

A redemption price paid for our sins, scarlet
red;

The cross and the grave—the dear, precious
dead!

But cease from your crying, O women and men!

Your Christ hath gone forth; he hath risen
to-day;

He hath gone from the gloom where he lately
hath been;

He hath gone a glad way, free from passion and
sin.

Shout hosannas to him; let the loud organ play;
Let your souls sing for joy! Christ hath risen
to-day!

Strew white lily blows—the soul of all flowers—

In the path of our Christ, who hath risen to-day;
And let each life-blest day, with its gift of glad
hours,

Be strewn thick with deeds, fair as white lily
flowers;

And with love unto him may we gladden the
way

Of the dear, loving Christ, who hath risen
to-day.

It Is Best, They Say

SORROW comes soon, my love;
Comes into the creeping years,
As still as the rustle of plumes that wave
On laden hearse for a waiting grave;
Or soft as the sound of a wind-waked leaf,
Or a falling ear from a harvest sheaf;
But it comes, my baby, with sobs and tears,
And creeps and creeps into all the years.

Sorrow comes sure, my love;
Comes into the hurrying years,
As a storm in the night, with crash and jar—
The sky bereaved of moon and star;
And it comes like the meeting of weaponed foes,
To curse and to kill with wounds and woes;
And it comes, my darling, with cries and fears,
And thrusts itself into all the years.

How I wish I could bear, my love,
Life's burden for you of care!
I would hold you so close to my willing heart,
And cheat every hurt of its ache and smart,

It Is Best, They Say

And strip every grief of its eating pain,
And life should fall sweet as a May noon rain ;
But I can not, my love ; to meet and bear
Whatever shall come, must be your share.

They say it is best, my love,
That our hands should be wounded some ;
Then we better know how to bind and heal
The hurts and the sorrows that others feel,
And we know how to wipe others' tears away
If our own eyes have wept sometime, some day ;
So they say it is best our sorrows come,
That our hands and hearts should be wounded
some.

And so we must live, my love,
Live on as it seemeth good,
And when burdens are heavy to bear, alway,
And your hands get weary with work, all day,
May your load be lighter, your toil more fair,
When you think of that love, that would take and
bear
Every sorrow for you—so gladly would,
If I only could—if I only could !

Wait

QUANT thou not wait for me, O hurrying
years,
While I look back upon the dear dead
past,
Though 't is to shed upon its grave my tears,
That even now are falling thick and fast?

Let me go back and bind the ripened sheaves
That I left wasting in the harvest field;
My night of need is come; these poor dead leaves
Are all I have my sustenance to yield.

Let me go back, and from dimmed eyes the tears
Let me wipe off till they be clear and dry;
Why did I leave them there in other years?
Methinks I thought I ne'er should mourn or cry.

Let me go back, with sad, repentant hands,
And gather the unkind words my lips have said,
And bid me walk the years on scorching sands,
But say to me their sting is lost and dead.

Wait

Let all my fair days die; but those I marred
With selfishness and sin, I humbly ask
To have them back again, unwounded and un-
scarred,
To live them better,—this to be my task.

Canst thou not wait, but now, O hurrying years
E'en while I lay at thy swift-going feet
Atonement for the past, of prayers and contrite
tears
That to my cup of rue there yet shall be some
sweet?

The shivering vines cling closer to the walls,
Around the house the wind creeps with a cry;
And while the midnight moon spreads ghostly
palls,
I and my soul are waiting the reply.

Jane, Jr.



JANE, JR., has hair like wheat,
Golden in its color;
Only of the two the wheat
Is by far the duller.

Eyes as brown as nuts that fall
In the late October;
Full of fun in jesting times,
Tender in the sober.

Lips that sometimes make you feel
All the time like tasting;
So much sweetness seems a sin
To be idly wasting.

Hands—such dainty little hands,
Dimpled deep and ruddy—
Just the kind of hands, you know,
For a lifetime study.

When the cows come up the lane,
When the sun is setting;
When the dew is falling soft,
Grass and daisies wetting,—

Jane, Jr.

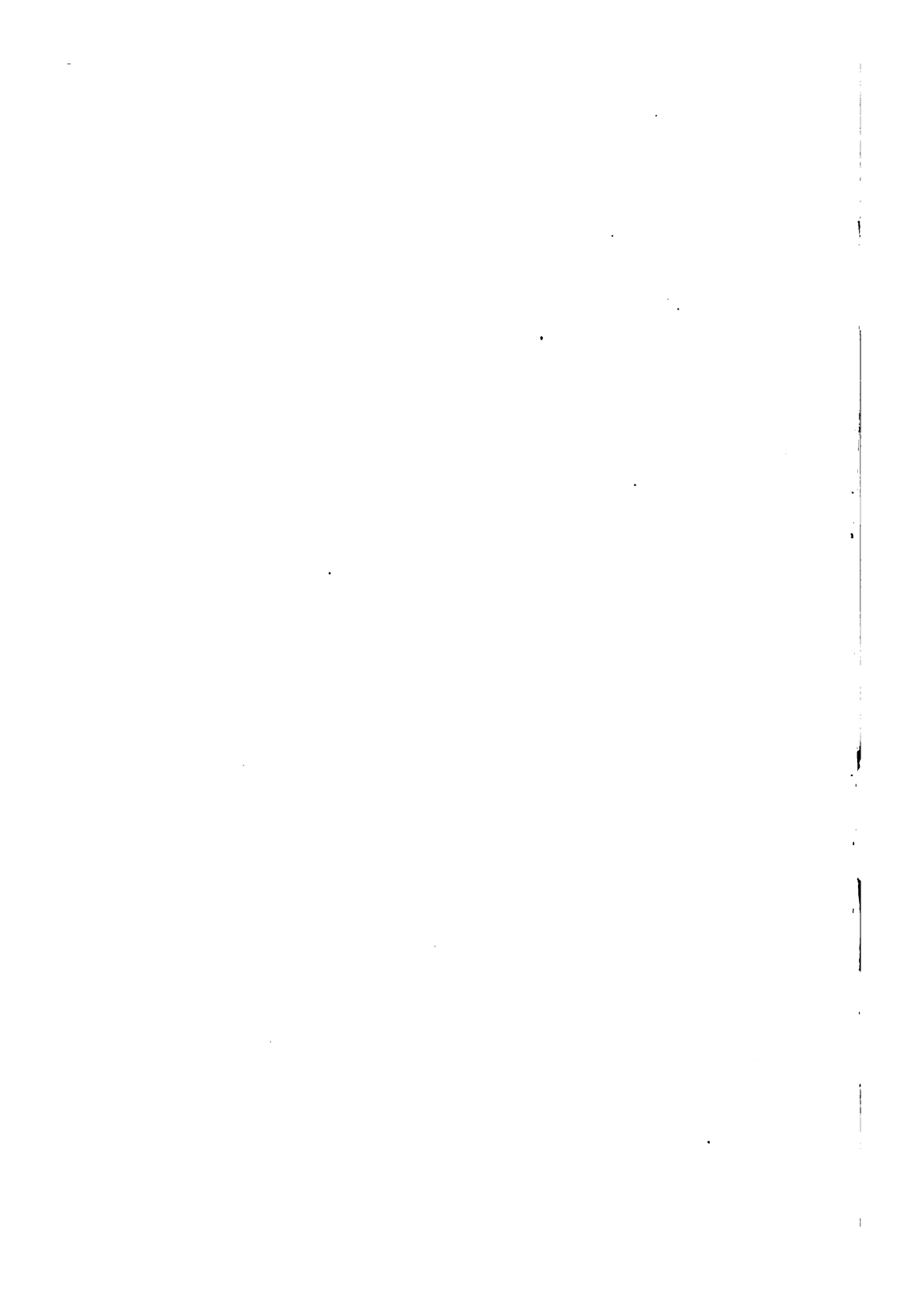
Jane, Jr., stands beside the bars,
And I stand beside her,
Feeling that I'd like to share
All that may betide her;

Share the bad and bitter things,
Share the sweets and honey;
Share her smiles and share her tears,
Share the old man's money.

Little lumps, fast in my throat,
Please to skip and let me
Tell my love of all my love
That has long beset me.

O, ye gods! to love's young dream
What a brisk death-rattle!
"Stop that spooning, Nancy Jane,
And hurry up the cattle!"

Jane, Jr., to the milking speeds,
A dutiful sixteen-year,
While I seek some quiet spot,
Cussing Jane, the senior.



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